KXSC

Works Cited

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Editor's Notes

Welcome to the second issue of the KXSC Zine- Works Cited. This semester, the KXSC content department came back to school with a certain hunger, one for knowledge, academic exploration, scholarship. Of course, all college students are meant to start the year with this desire, but there was something especially pressing this time around.

In this edition of the KXSC Zine, we curated articles centered around the philosophy, science, and history of the music we consume and subsequently bless the LA airwaves with during our programming. This installment features academic examinations of concert culture, analysis of recent shifts in the cultural treatments of certain genres, and dissection of the ways different mediums of media interact with one another. This collection also includes interviews with incredibly key historical figures that have helped shape music as we know it today.

I want to take time to thank Audrey Serrano, head of content department and Michael Lagos, who oversaw the design of this zine, for their time and dedication. Without their efforts, Works Cited would not have been possible.

Andie Kirby
Music Writing Director

We've arrived at our terrible twos. Creating the second-edition of the revamped KXSC zine was a learning process I'll forever be grateful for. At its heart, radio is a medium of collaboration. It was an honor and privilege to work with our contributors, from Google form idea to printed piece. When reading this zine, we invite you to feel the music. Welcome to Works Cited.

Audrey Serrano
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Move the Needle

by Ava Kalenze
DJ Palindromeda

I switched my phone's language to French the day I was admitted to study abroad in Paris nearly two years ago. Sometime between then and now Spotify launched its "daylist" function; an AI-generated playlist based on your listening behaviors, regenerating every few hours in case the playlist runs out of songs, or in case you're bored of what the computer says you're in the mood for. The program initially launched in English so my phone wouldn't translate the daylists' titles:

soul-crushing desiderium monday afternoon
warm fuzzy feeling 70s laurel canyon thursday morning
twee jangle wednesday afternoon
yearning cowboy friday midday
tender cold lonely saturday late-night

Then my phone began translating the daylists and things felt even more silly:
emotion compagne dimanche soir (farm emo sunday night)
For a while, I've disliked this new direction we're going in in terms of how we describe our music taste and, more seriously, ourselves. Naming micro-trends and squeezing into niches is so harmful to how we think about ourselves…being in college is about morphing and changing, not about finding ways to categorize ourselves at any particular moment. According to Spotify, the music I listen to is either warm and fuzzy or yearning and soul-crushing…whatever that means.

Whatever that is supposed to say about me, or the things I feel. Or whatever all that has to do with the music I listen to. Whatever.

The computer hasn't ever known "soul-crushing" or "tenderness" the way you and I have. And of course, I have music to put to each of these feelings: thank goodness. That's how I feel my way through them. Since I switched my phone to French, I had a job cataloging physical music. I held thousands of records over the course of a summer and fell in love with listening to the A side then B, the snaps and clips of vinyl records. I realized the best songs are the ones between the ones everyone knows.

I now know the computer doesn't know the feeling of hearing one of your favorite songs for the first time. The computer doesn't know how good it is to move the needle back and hear it for the second.

I listened to music a little differently after that. I made playlists differently, I listened to albums from start to finish as if they were records, even if they were only on my phone. Then I started digging on YouTube for records the Spotify computer hadn't even heard of. People put timestamps in the comments to tell you their favorite songs. Sometimes they write comments that exceed the character limit and flow into more comments about the first time they heard that song, moved the needle back.

When I returned from Paris two major things happened:

1. I started working at a radio station. At the radio station, I learned about the coolest music I've ever heard of and about the term "passive listening": listening to music without caring what you're hearing or interpreting. Everyone I work with listens to music on YouTube or just listens to our programming (it's awesome).

2. I met someone to crush on. The crush, oh well, nothing ever came of it. But every time he sent me a song it would kind of twinkle in my eye, and even though nothing came of it romantically, I got a lot of great music from knowing him.

In case you're struggling to see where I'm going with this, let me be clear: sometimes when Spotify anticipates your next movement it feels great. Someone knows what you are listening to and the mood you might be in. Someone knows when to nurse your wound with a good playlist and sometimes nothing seems better.

But let me tell you, and please believe me when I say, nothing is truly better than when your friend sends you a song they love because they know you'll love it too. Or when you're in the bathroom at a party but you love the song playing so you shazam it through the door. Nothing is better than hearing a song on the radio and tracking down the DJ's tracklist.

This is my call to you…pay attention. Tell your friends you like the song they put on. Stop listening to AI-generated playlists. Listen to records from start to finish. Tune into the radio. Buy a CD from the $1 bin you don't recognize. Shazam the song at a restaurant. Be curious instead of passive. Move the needle xx.

Here is a playlist of songs I've found in happenstance, listen if you'd like. I hope you'll find something new.

Masakatsu Takagi - Ooharu
Belbury Poly - Swingalong
Nancy Sinatra - So Long Babe
Satellite Lovers - Sunnyday, Holiday
Eula Cooper - I Can't Help if I Love You
Guit.tar - Sunkissed

Is *Country* Music Having a Renaissance?

by Cordelia Janow
DJ Delia

If you asked anyone about their music taste two years ago, they would probably say something like: "I like everything!"quickly followed by "Except country." While this attitude may persist, there has been a major shift in favor of country music from the artists themselves. Most notably, Beyonce's COWBOY CARTER shows off Beyonce in full country form from "Texas Hold Em" to "II Most Wanted." Sabrina Carpenter's newest album features a nod to country music as well, with tracks like "Slim Pickins," which features playful, Partonesque fingerpicking and a faux country accent. Ethel Cain, whose ambient alternative pop has always fallen somewhere in the country vein, has become synonymous with and famous for her deep south, american-flag-wielding aesthetics. The acoustic guitar and bursting chorus of Chappel Roan's "Red Wine Supernova" emulates a Sheryl Crow approach to pop. And of course, Post Malone has recently shifted from trap to country on his latest album F-1 Trillion, which boasts collaborations with Hank Williams, Dolly Parton, Billy Strings, and more. Surely this surge didn't come out of nowhere.

Were these artists meeting a demand? Were they sick and tired of the guitarless, disco-pop that has been so popular for the past 10 years? Or was it simply time for country music to return to the mainstream, with all of these artists serving as country catalysts?

The music scene isn't the only place where country aesthetics are on the rise. In fashion, cowboy boots and hats have become all the rage. Even aesthetic subgenres like cottage core and "y'allternative" draw on American southern aesthetics. The emergence of the trad-wife aesthetic and subsequent discourses (thank you Nara Smith and Ballerina Farm), has brought the image of the American pastoral back into cultural consciousness.

Stand alone, all of these examples may mean nothing, but when put together they point to a major shift in American popular culture. From music to fashion to content creation, Americana, as a feeling, seems to have regained hold. In some cases, this may point to a rise in American conservatism, where white-picket-fence families and prairie dresses seem more popular than they were 10 years ago. This is not the case for the country music industry.

Beyond Lo-Fi

A Guide to Finding Good Study Music

by Shalen Farahi
DJ Redvines

In an age of screen addiction and persistent overstimulation, where doomscroll breaks last longer than the actual studying, focusing proves difficult. Many students find it comforting to put on some background music to scratch the perpetual entertainment itch. But with the domination of streaming services providing the illusion of seemingly infinite selections, finding good study music can feel overwhelming. As someone who doesn't generally enjoy listening to "lo-fi beats," finding the right study music often becomes a form of procrastination itself. So after surveying friends, family, and fellow KXSC DJs, I've compiled my findings here to help you find study music that actually keeps you on-task.

Does music actually help?

Before venturing into the 2D-animated Lo-fi Girl hellscape, it's important to determine whether or not listening to music actually increases productivity. Of everyone I talked to, many claimed they found study music to be entirely distracting. Others (such as myself) explained that whether or not they listened was mood-dependent. In short, the answer to the question in bold is an unsatisfying one—it depends!

Album Recs

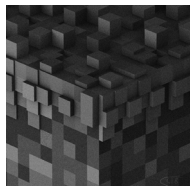
For those who want a wall of sound

Pyroclasts - *Sunn O)))*

For those who need to relax

Brian Eno - *Apollo: Atmospheres and Soundracks*

For all you nostalgics



C418 - *Minecraft - Volume Alpha*

Hypnotic beats to lock you in

Boards of Canada - *The Campfire Headphase*

Keep it simple

Some of the most popular genres for study are classical, ambient, film scores, and lo-fi beats (of course). One major shared characteristic between these genres is a general philosophy of minimalism. The arrangements are often very sparse, taking up just enough mental real estate without being distractions themselves. Furthermore, most people explained that hearing vocals in their study music interrupts their internal monologue, making uninterrupted thinking arduous. So when in doubt, go for something instrumental.

Good study music draws just the right amount of attention to itself. It aims to be interesting enough to occupy the part of your brain craving stimulation, without demanding any of your precious attention.

Repetition is your friend!

One of the most effective elements of lo-fi beats are the beats themselves. Their rhythmic simplicitand repetitive nature allow the track to become familiar very quickly, helping the listener get in a rhythm and move the music to the mental background. The alternative to this would be to opt for something without a dominant rhythmic element, such as ambient music or film/video game scores (the latter has the added bonus of being composed specifically to keep the listener engaged).

Consider what you listen to

While some listeners surveyed expressed a desire to tune out their study music, others explained that they often put on music they actively enjoyed, helping to motivate them and promote concentration This mirrors the concept of Adventure Studying, which centers around the idea that our brain craves novelty. According to this philosophy, if we put ourselves in interesting situations, we might enjoy the act of studying, and create outlets for productivity.

Interview: Chris Stein

Chris Stein, cofounder of Blondie, may have lived even more lives than the nine given to his black cat, Lou. Both joined me on a video call to chat about their human half's new memoir, "Under a Rock." **The book is a masterclass in rich storytelling, forgoing glitz and glamour in a stream-of-consciousness divulgence from a generational musician. Reminiscence is a gift, and each reader is a lucky recipient.**

Chris Stein on…

Photography:

I was always dabbling with it. Even when I was a little kid, I had the brownie cameras.

I just liked the art process, and composing the images, and getting those slices of time. I wish I had taken more pictures, generally.

The photography was a part of the note taking for memories in a lot of cases. The photographs spur on memory.

Los Angeles:

It was nice being around all those old Hollywood guys when we were out in LA. We hooked up with [Sam Shaw], and screenwriter Ted Allen, and Cassavetes. It was kind of amazing.

I think the sense of personal space changes the further west you get. I don't know if I expound on that theory in the book. People stay further apart the further west you get. You'd be walking on the street and somebody will be across the street and they'll look at you weird, like you're too close to them.

Influence:

Blondie was just more diverse. The Ramones and Talking Heads had a very specific focus and we were just pulling elements in from lots of different places, musical elements. That became what the Blondie sound was.

We have this authenticity which I think derives from our lack of megastardom. I always see Blondie as this big cult band. I never thought we quite made it into the A-list. But at the same time, Debbie laid all this groundwork for all these girls.

Breaking up with your bandmate:
Yeah, it's just how the course is. I've been married for 25 years to [my wife] Barbara now, so it is what it is. That's my longest relationship. And Debbie and I just have a similar mindset, and are usually on the same page about things we're doing.

Aging:

The only aging process that's difficult is the physicality of getting fatigued and dealing with all that nonsense. That's it for me. Again, Blondie has a certain kind of credibility and authenticity that some others may lack.

Touring:

I always liked the recording a little bit more. But live shows are great, and there's nothing that compares to that, doing the whole thing with the peovvple. But the fucking hotels, and the airplanes… after 50 years of that stuff, it's rough.

Fate:

I'm kind of a "time is a flat circle" guy.

NYC:

When I was growing up, the word gentrification wasn't in the vocabulary. But there's still great stuff going on here. I was lucky to be involved with all that stuff when I was younger. Growing up in the '60s was amazing. I took it all for granted when it was happening, of course, but I see it differently now.

Punk:

I think the first two Rolling Stones albums are completely punk. Stylistically, they really have all the elements of punk music in there. You know, the fringe aspect of the beatnik scene and all of that early '60s music scene was similar. It was the same. It was all on the outsides of society. So when we got to CBGBs and everything, it just seemed normal. It was a great thing to be involved with, but I'd always been on the periphery of the music scene.

Fashion:

The guys were very influenced by the Rat Pack and James Bond and all of that earlier '60s stuff in our stylings. It wasn't just the British mod scene, but that was a heavy element.

Film:

Blow Up was huge to me. All the kids who went to see Blow Up immediately decided they should be photographers. And Performance, the Donald Cammell movie. That's a fucking masterpiece. It's Mick Jagger's one brilliant movie.

Acting:

I don't know if I have any acting ability. It's tricky. My wife is a real savant. If she hears the song once, she knows all the lyrics. That comes from her acting career, where she's really good at memorizing lines. I'm not that good at that stuff.

Blondie's New Album:

I don't know if it's going to be out this year or not. I'm looking forward to it. We've had it done for a while now.

Just having grown up being a music fan and listening to recordings and analyzing all the little aspects of what I'm listening to, [recording] is a great process. And music uses a different part of your brain than anything else. There's this kind of emotional through line to listening to music. Some of my favorite tracks of all time are from the last 10, 15 years. There's modern stuff that I think is just fabulous.

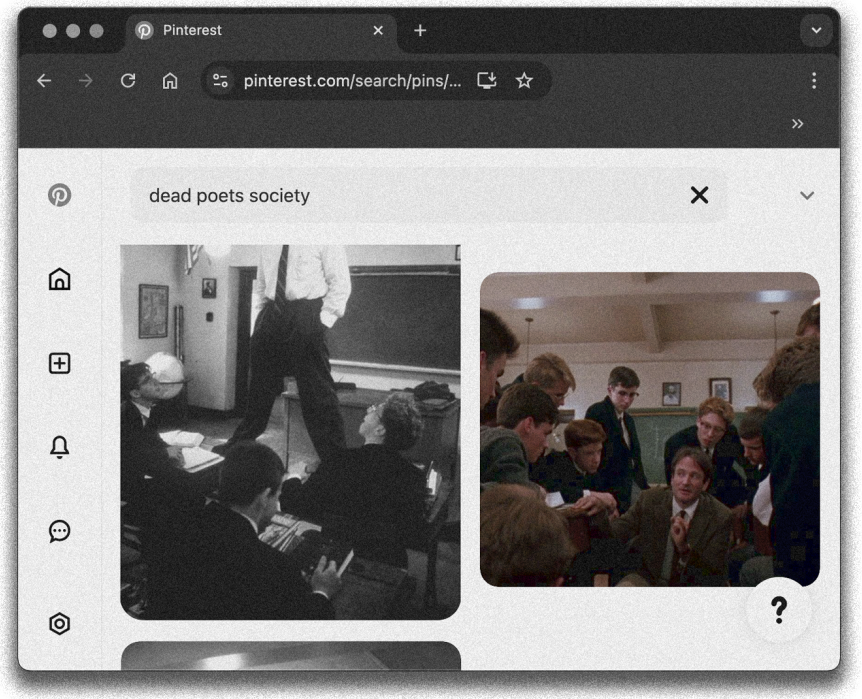
There's a couple of things that are really old that we reprocessed. There's a couple of cover songs in this next bunch of stuff. There's a song I've been wanting to record for 40 years.

Legacy:

I guess I'm optimistic, and I enjoy adding a little to the culture, and being recognized now that we're in the position we are now. It's got this elder statesman role.

Between, you know, all the tension and doing drugs and all that shit, I don't know. We're lucky.

interviewed by Madeline Frino
DJ Peaches



Snark Academia

A critique of the online aesthetics of academia

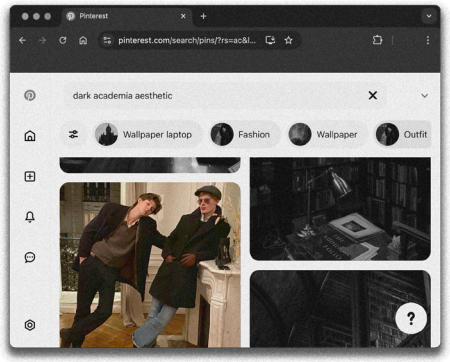
By Lalou Ratsimihah
DJ Pinkie Pie

There are some cultural landmarks we can attribute to the fascination with "looking" academic, Dead Poets Society (1989) and Donna Tartt's The Secret History come to mind, but nowhere is the "academia" aesthetic more prevalent than the internet. We've all heard of "dark academia," and maybe those truly committed to the internet have heard of "witch academia" or "STEM academia." Anything involving the pursuit of research, scholarship, or education is classified as "academia," but why do we expect it to look and sound a certain way?

When scrolling on Pinterest (my main source for this paper), I couldn't help but notice the wealth in every user's post. If not in the people they showcased, in the architecture they praised. The online fashion of academia (including dark and light) is dripping in wealth. From leather Oxfords to wool peacoats, academic fashion is reliant on you being wealthy and wanting to appear wealthy.

Academia calls for a specific type of wealth. The type of wealth that can send you to elite Ivy League schools and Oxbridge (Oxford and Cambridge) easily, even expectantly. The type of wealth that meant your parents, and their parents, and so on went there too. The "collegiate gothic" architecture that occupies these universities complements the fashion perfectly. Online, you can only look like an academic if you occupy academic-looking places. Online academic fashion is expensive and bespoke while being simultaneously unkempt in the pursuit of education. An old hardcover book with coffee rings all over it or a wrinkled Louis Vuitton button-up carelessly thrown on. It's wealth without a second thought.

The fashion of academia is reserved for the fabulously wealthy or those trying to imitate them. Even if they're successful, their style is expected to be housed in institutions with harder access. Commoners can't get in.



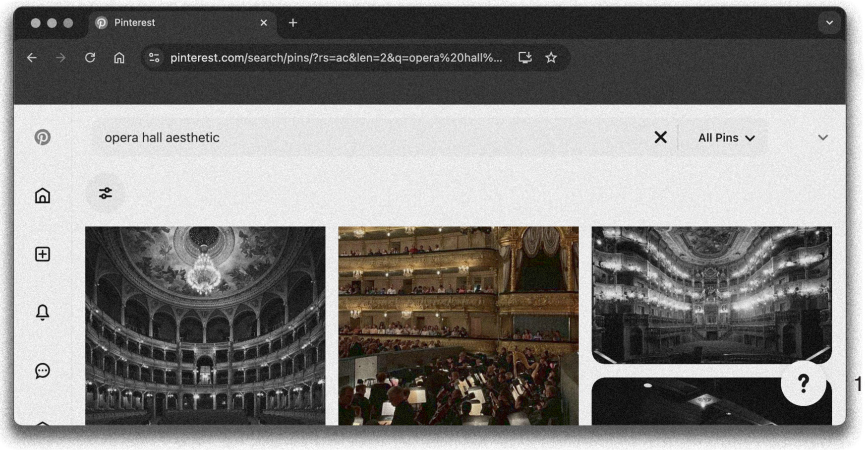
The online academic aesthetic is often soundtracked by concertos and sonatas, regardless of the classical genre's actual presence in modern academic settings. College campuses now play "No Hands" more often than "Rhapsody in Blue," so where does this association come from?

In 1993, Frances H. Rauscher conducted a study that concluded that listening to Mozart's sonata for two pianos for ten minutes improved subjects' IQ test scores. Many have taken this study and used it to conclude that listening to classical music, in general, makes you smarter. In reality, spatial reasoning improves when listening to any music because it is processed similarly in the brain. The genre rarely has anything to do with it.

Another reason for the association between academia and classical music is prestige. Historically, classical music was written for wealthy patrons of composers. The Medicis of Florence and the Habsburgs in Vienna would commission works from composers to enhance their courts. When classical music was performed, it was rarely for the poor, general public. Concerts happened in grand halls with expensive tickets. This prestige translates into academia. The "best" academic institutions are the most prestigious ones. Those who care more about prestige are more likely to be interested in classical music, IQ tests, and Oxbridge.

What we generally consider classical music is now classified as "Western art" music because every culture in the world has its own version of classical music. Referring to only the works of Mozart, Beethoven, and their contemporaries as "classical music" would completely erase the music outside of Western Europe being created at the same time. Just the term "classical music" is exclusionary, so relating it to someone's quality of education is even worse.

There is no hard rule that determines what an academic looks like. I understand that Pinterest users aren't thinking of purposefully excluding people when they post their aesthetic sweater vests, but it does show their inherent bias. Academia can look and sound like anything.



Walking into the Fire with Open Eyes

:Moshing as a Portal

by Jonathan Wong-Hayden
DJ Alice in Wonderland

Like the ripples from a stone dropped in a still lake, a shower drain spiraling in reverse, people cascaded out like a fire had started. On the floor, people were making their way to move to the sides, only to let an even larger number of people spill in.

When the call to start moshing rings, it is an invitation to go into that fire, a portal into another world. I went in. This was my chance to get out from the outskirts and closer to the stage, to the artist, to the music. To the source of it all. There was no hesitation – it had the immediacy of magnetism, and everyone instinctively followed their polarity – go out, or go in.

Until now, the performance had been calm, almost reverent. The first two songs had been acoustic, one guitar, two singers in harmony, and the rest of the band standing off to the side. I was at the Fonda Theater, a Roaring 20s relic with its checkerboard floor and big blue curtains paired with gothic adornments: wide riveted archways, ornate gates, ringed candleholders. The night was full of these anachronisms: the artists wore fishnets and ripped knitwear paired with Victorian corsets and bows, harmonizing while strumming acoustic guitars on this wooden stage.

And then the call: static reverb droning against twinkly synths, distortion; a scream. As I entered the pit I became engaged in the haptic: feeling through people, falling into the mass, grasping the texture of light, and a shared language of only one word at a time (Moten and Harney 98). It was not an out-of-body experience. It was a widening of experience, not of feeling others through myself but feeling myself through others. We became the foam of two waves colliding in the moment of the crash, a return to the ocean of feeling from which our individual lives are just a respite. It was swimming; it was floating. There was no world beyond touch, of falling in – of being held up. I knew everyone there because I was them – they felt the world as I thought it, and the whole world was of movement and dancing. Of sound and distortion.

I was reminded of Judith Butler's notion of vulnerability, how it is our vulnerability that both constitutes and dispossesses us, and how we are both "for" and "by virtue of another" (Butler 24). Of how vulnerability renders us susceptible to violence, but in doing so, gives us a nexus of connection – we have all been vulnerable: for at least one moment, I know how you have felt because I have been there too.

This vulnerability to violence is not distinct from the vulnerability that opens us up to others. They are, in fact, both kindling for the same fire. But, as Butler points out, much as there is an unequal distribution of wealth, there is also an unequal distribution of vulnerability (Butler, Gambetti, Sabsay 5). If this is true, then concerts, places for dancing, and mosh pits are troves of vulnerability.

The pit has the outward appearance of violence, but rather than the violence of the world (which operates largely unseen) that we are born into, the pit is a choice of phenomenological violence and affective sociality. While there are instances of people getting hurt, the overall ethos of the pit is one of helping others when they go down. When someone falls, people around them form a circle to give them the space to get up. Usually, people are pulled up before they even have the chance to reach the floor. We all acknowledge the possible violence of this world we enter into, and it is this shared, chosen susceptibility to violence that allows the possibility of mutual solidarity and looking out for people who have fallen down. The "other" automatically becomes an ally and not a threat because we acknowledge that the violence is always already here. It is also a space where violence is not managed but our exposure is controlled: join the center if you wish, stay on the outskirts, and watch the fire if you want.

The artist here was Yeule, whose website starts as follows: "The Glitch Princess, Nat Čmiel, was born 16 December 1997 in Singapore, Singapore. Nat Čmiel is a non-binary painter, musician, performance artist and cyborg entity (Yuele)." They further go on to describe their interest in "the augmented virtual, the dystopian aesthete, and a fascination with the psychology behind digital intimacies" They describe how this interest in "digi-empathy" came from a feeling of social isolation and general disaffection, a feeling of foreclosure, a feeling of no feeling. They describe how the digital world has affected them, saying "While abstracted from their online contemporaries, personas allowed for neon, spectral dreams and overflowing imagination. Other times the digital sphere left them stifled, blurring the lines between fabricated realities and corporeal life." This results in their "inclination towards the digital in lieu of reality." The reality we inhabit is not the only reality: and it is through what Yeule calls "portals" or "rifts" that we can access these other realities.

They began with the song "Don't Be So Hard On Your Own Beauty," a soft acoustic guitar-driven song about connection as a remedy for disaffection. Yeule opens by singing "Currently," sweetly, softly, and organically, before the next lines add a multi-layered, reverb and chorus effect that gives the impression of a cyborg singing in an empty room, of singing about loneliness through metallic lungs. The chorus elaborates on this feeling, singing "make me feel something other than desolated nothing / I am desperate in a nightmare / where I'm trying to find you / In a maze with no staircase." Yeule is vulnerable, displaying how we are both for and by virtue of another, as they end the chorus with "I crawl and trip down / Fall again, you pick up all my guts / Spilling out, bruised up, bloodied up." If Yeule's songs resonate with people, it is for this disaffection, this falling down, this spilling out of guts, and the need for someone to put them back together. The second verse describes what this looks like: "You tell me not to / Be so hard on my own beauty / You still / Hold me even though I'm made of fire burning through / You hold me gently." This fire is vulnerability: violence taking place on the body and the desire to be held gently, even as it burns through the person holding them. The song was performed, not sung, and was accompanied by Yeule's movement – dancing that called to mind the inhuman: not grotesque or abhorrent, but slow and gentle movements as they twirled, stretched, spun in unnatural ways. Unnatural body, inked skin, mutable under every luminescence. In front of a backdrop of ghostlike lamps and blue shadow lights, their hands wound, reached, grasped, transcended until the final words "Unconsciously I feel you / shake me awake from a bad dream / with my eyes / open." This is the portal: these four words – "unconsciously, I feel you." I feel you unconsciously. You, I

feel, unconsciously. I unconsciously feel you. Without thinking, I know you are there. I know you, without thinking.

This is the world that Yeule makes: a world where we are defined but not constrained by our vulnerability. And this world-making is explicit. Their website's description ends with "yeule is inviting us to transcend into a post-human world where expression is no longer bound by identity, but rather we are free to assemble ourselves along lines of affinity. A future where our assigned gender is no longer relevant, where we can congregate with whoever we are drawn to, regardless of our assigned human forms (Yuele)." At the Fonda on October 29th, 2023, this future was here, even if only for a little bit, found in a portal to a different world.

It is not a world one would mistake for the outside world either: light operates differently there. It is not used to make the world visible: it is the whole world, the entirety of what you see – swathes of color, violently crashing into corneas, the visible body of techno-digital soundscapes. Guttural screams in harmony with 8-bit beats, one voice of infinite width rising towards the stage, and a cyborg melody floating with it all. And the aesthetics are an aspiration too: clothes with silhouettes not reducible to simple descriptions, and all the other markings of subculture found on the body.

While readable as just aesthetics, these are signs of an orientation away from the promise of "the good life," a refusal to believe that a college degree and khakis will uphold their end of the bargain (Berlant). This fantasy of the good life is cruel optimism: put off the things that make you happy to earn money so you can be happy, only you won't earn as much money as you think, and the price of happiness is higher too (Berlant). Enmeshed in this pursuit of happiness is a set of logics: life is causal, time is linear, individuals are atomistic, and if we work hard enough violence will never come to us. We won't see it. It might as well not exist. Rather than engaging with the cruelly optimistic promise of the fantasy of the good life, this is choosing a different world entirely. Yeule's world of digital posthumanism, the pit's world of hapticality, the world of any subculture – these are all reminders that we live in a world, not the world.

The set ended with the song "Bites on My Neck," a song about the underside of love – obsession, jealousy, hurt: how being vulnerable can open us up to violence, to the "bites on my neck from your mouth." In the background of the song, Yeule whispers "How to feel? How to feel? How to feel?" This question has many meanings: how to feel, safely? How tofeel knowing that feeling leaves us open to violence? How to feel knowing that the feeling will end? Yeule is aware of the double nature of vulnerability, as they sing in the refrain "You know that I could have loved you with my bare hands. You know that I could have killed you with my bare hands." This is the central paradox of vulnerability. But Yeule has an answer: one line repeated at the end of the song. "I had to walk into the fire to know how to feel." "I had to walk into the fire to know how to feel."To know how the fire feels you must feel the fire through you. To know how to feel means walking into the fire, to know violence, to know that violence is how we feel. Walking into the fire means becoming light, to viscerally feel the way we are both for and by virtue of each other. To enter a world where falling down means being picked up. To enter the pit means walking into the fire with eyes wide open.

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Paralled Playlists

Our Generational Coming-Of-Age Feelings

by Brady Hines

"We're afraid that we will never escape our past. We're afraid of what the future will bring. We're afraid that we will not get into the college of our choice. We're afraid we won't be loved, we won't be liked, we won't succeed." In this quote, and throughout the film, Ladybird represents a larger cultural shift toward the wholehearted obsession for "coming-of-age" films. Through the full display of experiences within maturing adolescence, the aesthetics and feelings captured in these movies become ingrained in the collective identity of an entire generation.

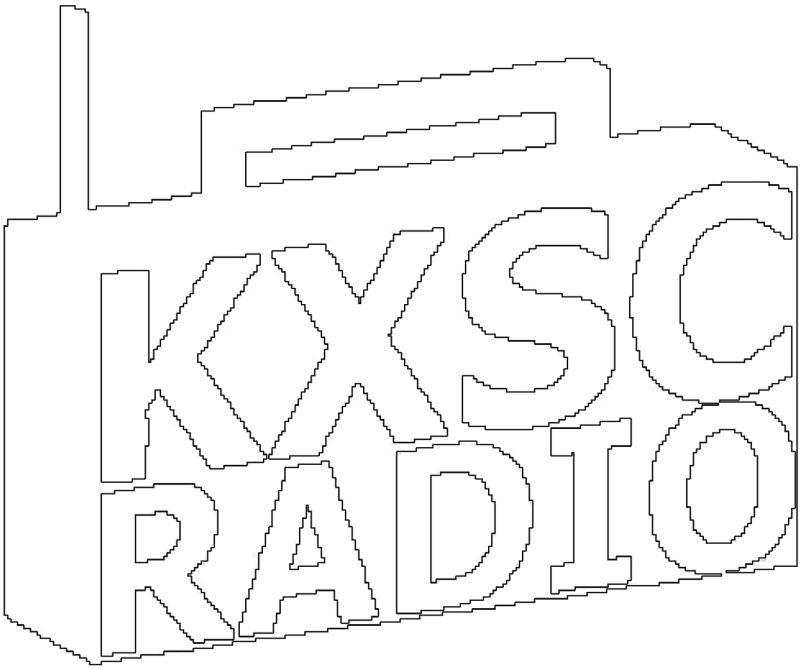
Films such as Ladybird, Perks of Being a Wallflower, The Breakfast Club, Booksmart, and many others have inspired this coming-of-age mindset throughout their Gen-Z audiences. We adore these films and allot them prominent positions within our hearts, not only for their sheer entertainment, but for the solace, authenticity, and cathartic release they undoubtedly provide. The cultural entrenchment these movies have obtained is only amplified when venturing into other forms of media, such venturing into other forms of media, such as music. within our hearts, not only for their sheer entertainment, but for the solace, authenticity, and cathartic release they undoubtedly provide. The cultural entrenchment these movies have obtained is only amplified when venturing into other forms of media, such as music.

Scrolling through Spotify displays an endless amount of playlists that display titles of "coming-of-age," or something similar, whether it be a variant of some main character–growing up–indie film soundtrack–nostalgia–chasing-the-feeling-of-the-tunnel-scene amalgamation. Each one features its own curated, thematic cover photo, of famous movie scenes, freeing night drives through vibrant cities, or lawless bike rides and dances on beaches. What's even more compelling is the contents of these playlists: Lorde's "Ribs" and "Supercut," The Backseat Lovers' "Kilby Girl," GROUPLOVE's "Tongue Tied," Dayglow's "Can I Call You Tonight?," Cage The Elephant's "Cigarette Daydreams," among a plethora of other transportative time capsules.

While almost all these songs are not featured explicitly in coming-of-age films, their frequent inclusion across these playlists sparks curiosity. Granted, many of these songs relay similar narratives of fleeting experiences and self-discovery, but how do the songs that do not have these themes represent coming-of-age as a possible musical subgenre? We can look for translations from these coming-of-age movies and their applicability in our own lives. These films extend beyond the pressures of academia by capturing and relating moments that reflect the social rhythms and personal dynamics of young people's lives, however, they still, somewhat monotonously, revolve around school interactions and education. We may not be thrust into the same situations that these films depict, but our relation to academia as youth remains the same. This generation of playlists seems all the more clear. Coping with academia, even if it is solely through the songs that comprise a created playlist, can be enough to create the same feelings of comfort and relatability that coming-of-age movies provide.

Temporarily disregarding those "feelings," it's difficult to contextualize coming-of-age music because of how disconnected these playlists can be within themselves. They don't follow a singular genre, structure, sound, or even a specific narrative, and yet, a collective consciousness associating them with each other has formed. They may simply serve as what was popular during the era, a summary of our collective feelings while growing up, or possibly as a time blip that encapsulated 2020. Many of the featured sounds may feel dated or faddish, but that should not diminish the purpose they served as a collective listening experience. Still, carving out a place where the term "coming of age" can be used to describe a subset of music may be too lofty to actually last within the music world.

One of the only possible conclusions to this discussion may be that defining coming-of-age in music involves entirely different parameters than how it is depicted within film. Coming-of-age films are often distinct in their narratives of maturity and self-discovery, but those same themes are not always detectable in coming-of-age music. Even if the creation of these playlists was collectively derived in some way, shape, or form, we value them as "coming-of-age" because of our own personal growth with the songs, and how they were present and accompanying us on our journeys through adolescence. The current generation may create their own version of a coming-of-age playlist, filled with entirely different songs and collective memories. However, the appeal will remain the same: we cling to the idea of coming-of-age because of its idealized authenticity and relatability. Ultimately, a strict definition may be less suited to defining the music, where its value remains in the situations we associate with it.



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